

Spectrum



Photos by Bonnie Heater



(Clockwise from left) Flashing “Fuel Availability” on the marquee at Gate 1 alerts motorists where gas can be purchased on post Sept. 30. (Above) Traffic backed up on Chamberlain Avenue Sept. 26 as motorists waited to fill up their tanks. (Right) Kent Tinsley, Fort Gordon police officer directs traffic and explains to motorists why the pumps are closed mid-morning Sept. 26 at the Fort Gordon Gate 1 Shoppette. (Below left) A post Department of Police stands at the entrance of the gate 1 shoppette as motorists wait to fill their vehicles with the only gas available in the area – regular grade at \$3.89 per gallon.



Short gas supplies fuel long lines, high prices

Bonnie Heater
Signal staff

Gas shortages rippling across the Southeast touched Fort Gordon last week.

At about 11:30 a.m. on Sept. 26, Nancy Freeman, one of the managers of the Fort Gordon Gate 1 Shoppette, had to turn the pumps off. There was no gas. Earlier phone calls to suppliers yielded nothing.

A post police officer was already stationed at the entrance way of the shoppette.

“Traffic started to back up on Chamberlain Avenue about 6 a.m., and I had to call the military police this morning to direct traffic,” Freeman explained. “The trucks can’t get in to deliver the gas.”

Jerry McGruder, an employee at the Fort Gordon Gate 1 Shoppette, assisted Freeman in setting up cones to block the entrance to the pumps. Kent Tinsley, a policeman on post, helped direct traffic and explain to motorists why the pumps were closed.

Minutes before the closing of the pumps two of the customers in line to pay for their gas expressed their concerns. “The gas shortage has caused me to wait in long lines,” said retired Sgt. Maj. Charles Pruett.

“I had to become more conservative,” said Charles Moore, a retired Air Force veteran. “I am consolidating my trips. I only use my car when I really need it.”

Another customer said, “Car dealers should be making more of these cars,” said retired Sgt. Maj. Eleazer Nikoi pointing to his 1989 Geo Metro. “We also need to build more refineries in this country.”

Since the Fort Gordon Gate 5 Shoppette closed Sept. 22 for upgrading most patrons had been filling up at the Gate 1 Shoppette, according to Freeman. “We were getting their customers as well as ours,” she said. “For a few days we had to limit our customers to 10 gallons of gas.

“There is definitely a shortage of premium and mid-grade gas in the area,” she added. “We are only selling the regular-grade of

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1st Sgt. Chris Perry
Company B, 369th Signal Battalion

Families were forced into neighborhood gas stations to fill up their tanks.

Just outside Gate 2 at the Citgo Gas Station, located at the corner of Tobacco and Karleen Roads, lines were growing.

“We are definitely experiencing an increase in gas sales,” said Patel Mainak, the station manager. Regular gas was selling for \$3.99 9/10 per gallon about 10 cents more than on post.

One of the customers in the long lines waiting to fill up his Dodge Ram 1500 truck was 1st Sgt. Chris Perry of Company B, 369th Signal Battalion. “It is ridiculous,” he said. “Normally it costs me \$90 to fill up my truck. For the past three weeks I have only been driving back and forward to work. But once I get on post I am using a lot of gas driving everywhere to be where my Soldiers are. It’s killing me.”

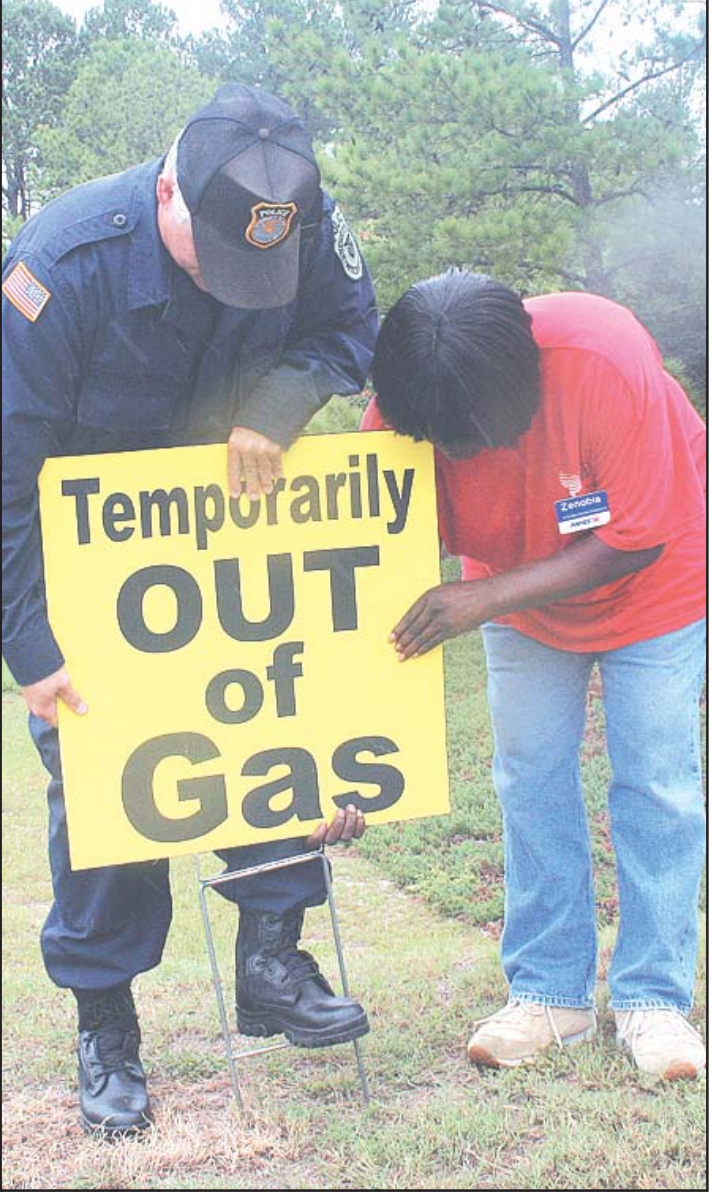
A shipment arrived but once again late in the morning Sept. 27 the “Temporarily Out of Gas” sign was posted once again at the Gate 1 Shoppette.

Official statements from suppliers place the blame for the shortages on the production shutdowns caused by the two recent hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico that halted pumping and refineries in the Southeast. Suppliers are estimating that interrupted supplies may continue for about two more weeks.

gas, but some of our customers still pushed the premium and mid-grade buttons at our pumps.”

During the day work continued on the pumps at the Fort Gordon Gate 5 Shoppette which was expected to be back in operation within the week.

With no gas for sale on post military retirees, reservists, National Guardsmen, active duty service members and their



(Above) Kent Tinsley, a Fort Gordon police officer, assists Cara White, an Army and Air Force Exchange Service employee at the Gate 1 shoppette, in putting up a “temporarily out of gas” sign moments after the shoppette ran out of gas Sept. 26. (Left) Cara White and



Veronica Washington [pictured on the right], AAFES employees at Gate 1 service station/shoppette, help customer Zenobia Lawrence as she pre-pays \$60 to fill up her car moments before the pumps closed.



(Above) First Sgt. Chris Perry, Company B, 369th Signal Battalion, [beside his Dodge Ram truck and to the right of the Coca Cola sign) joins other customers in filling up at the Citgo Service Station at the corner of Tobacco and Karleen Roads after the post ran out of gas near lunch time Sept. 26. (Right) The AAFES Service Station/Shoppette at Gate 2 on Tobacco Road closed Sept. 22 for safety upgrades of its pumps.

